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"Invading *Walden*," Part II: The Thoreauvian Dilemmas of Wallace Stegner's *On a Darkling Plain*

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> I am certainly influenced by Thoreau; I hunt up the most remote backwoods farm in Vermont to spend my summers on; I write things that have the inescapable stamp of his influence on them. Call it a pervasive rather than a specific influence, and I am ready to agree that Darkling Plain stems from Walden. It's a poor thing, but mine own, and I rather like the idea of its having distinguished ancestors.[1]

Thus ends Wallace Stegner's letter to Walter Harding of 14 July 1940. Stegner would go on to become an important American writer. Author of thirty books in a variety of forms and genres, he earned the Pulitzer Prize in fiction for his novel *Angle of Repose* (1971) and the National Book Award in fiction for his novel *The Spectator Bird* (1976).[2] Five times the winner of an O. Henry Memorial Award for short fiction, seven times anthologized in the annual Best American Short Stories anthologies, Stegner had been reckoned one of America's masters of short fiction in the 1940s and 1950s, until he decided the short story was a young writer's game and stopped writing them altogether.[3] Instead he chose to focus on his novels (of which he wrote thirteen in all) and his many volumes of non-fiction, which included sophisticated, evocative works of memoir (*Wolf Willow*, 1962), biography (*The Uneasy Chair: A Biography of Bernard DeVoto*, 1974), criticism (*The Writer in America*, 1952), and history (*Beyond the Hundredth Meridian: John Wesley Powell and the Second Opening of the West*, 1954), as well as collections of essays (*The Sound of Mountain Water*, 1969) on subjects as diverse as the art of fiction, Mormon history and culture, the American West, racism, nature, conservation and the environment—all subjects about which Stegner had an enduring interest and passionately held convictions.

Stegner exerted significant influence on younger generations of writers through his own writings, through his civic examples as a relentless defender of the American wilderness, and through his pioneering work as the founding director of the creative writing program at Stanford University—a program which shares honors with the Iowa Writers Workshop as one of the two premiere centers for the advanced study of creative writing in America. Among the writers Stegner mentored at Stanford between 1946 and 1971 were Edward Abbey (*Desert Solitaire*, 1968), Wendell Berry (*The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*, 1977), Ken Kesey (*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, 1962), N. Scott Momaday (*The Way to Rainy Mountain*, 1969), Tillie Olson (*Tell Me a Riddle*, 1961), Robert Stone (*Dog Soldiers*, 1974), Ernest J. Gaines (*The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman,* 1971), and Larry McMurtry (*Lonesome Dove*, 1986). Wendell Berry has described the extent of Stegner's influence on his own work more than once: "I've become his follower in lots of ways. And it didn't happen at Stanford, but when I came away, when I came back and settled here [in Port Royal, Kentucky] and began to read his non-fiction books—*Wolf Willow*, *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian*, the Devoto biography, and the conservation essays. His very painstaking attempt to understand himself in terms of his own regional sources has been extremely important and confirming to me.... I think he's probably the first American fiction writer to be a conservationist.... Stegner becomes the ancestor or predecessor of the next generation of people like Edward Abbey and Gary Snyder."[4]

Indeed, some of the preeminent writers on nature and the environment from the past several decades have likewise paid Stegner the highest tributes as an influence, among them Terry Tempest Williams, Barry Lopez, Gretel Ehrlich, Ivan Doig, and Edward Abbey. Stegner's "Wilderness Letter" (1960) and his essay "The Sense of Place" (1986) are classic texts in the history of American literary environmentalism. The former document in particular served as a rallying manifesto for many within the nascent environmental movement, catalyzing passage of the landmark Wilderness Act of 1964, as the National Wildlife Federation noted in their 2003 citation upon inducting Stegner into the

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Conservation Hall of Fame (other writers to have been inducted include Aldo Leopold, Rachel Carson, John Muir, John Burroughs, and Henry David Thoreau). Scholarship focusing on Stegner's literary, environmental, and scholarly contributions to American culture and public debate have dramatically increased in the past decade, particularly in the context of historicizing the American West.

When Wallace Stegner wrote back to Walter Harding in July 1940, he had achieved as yet almost none of the accomplishments sketched out above, but he had already begun to exhibit thematic preoccupations that would underpin his writings over the next half century, just as he had begun to form ideas that would influence the direction of his public life. Some of these preoccupations and ideas are evident in his early letter to Harding, and even more so in his third novel. "Probably my admiration for [Thoreau] had something to do with the attraction of the gathering theme of Darkling Plain. His disgust with certain sides of human society is easy to agree with in 1940, and easy and perhaps mistaken imitations of his primitivism are tempting."[5]

Though late in life he would not look back at *On a Darkling Plain* as one of his favorite works, referring to it disparagingly as "a little jejune novel" in which he was experimenting with the materials of his Saskatchewan childhood,[6] it was in fact his first full-length novel, the most ambitious fiction project he had yet undertaken, and he was inclined to take it seriously enough when he responded to Harding's query. The response was eloquent, well-framed, and uncommonly generous in its provision of details. Stegner sketched out the novel's autobiographical basis, tracing the roots of its story to a series of memories from childhood that had been rekindled during a recent walking trip in Vermont. Offering Harding a brief account of his hit-and-miss work on the novel, which took him through several distinct draft versions (two of which he destroyed), Stegner noted for the record some of the literary stimuli that had prompted him, in part, to undertake the novel, including some stirring imagery and ideas in the poetry of Archibald MacLeish and Matthew Arnold. Accordingly Stegner turned to MacLeish for the novel's title-page epigraph, "Men are brothers for life lived, and are hurt for it," and he took the novel's title from the closing lines of Arnold's most famous poem: "And we are here as on a darkling plain / Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight, / Where ignorant armies clash by night."[7]

Stegner devotes the bulk of his letter to Harding to one last important—albeit general—influence ("Call it a pervasive rather than a specific influence" he suggests), of which he admits becoming aware comparatively late in the writing process: "I can't see any direct impetus from Thoreau, since I hadn't been reading him at the time and so far as I can remember didn't think of him until, with the manuscript piling up, I recognized the essential problem as the Thoreauvian dilemma."[8]

Other distinctive voices in the American literary tradition have staked out similar territory to very good effect—Thomas Merton or John Haines come quickly to mind. Neither of these writers would appear to be seriously indebted to Thoreau's experiment in rustic self-sufficiency at Walden Pond, nor to the narrative of spiritual independence and environmental engagement through which he immortalized that venture as an American cultural touchstone. Yet in the wake of *Walden*'s canonization, literary narratives of solitude, simplicity, and voluntary retreat into wild or rustic settings are bound to draw comparison to Thoreau's masterwork. Indeed, Wendell Berry has justly complained that "one of the strongest of contemporary conventions is that of comparing to Thoreau every writer who has been as far out of the house as the mailbox."[9] Fortunately, this mistake is easy enough to avoid in the case of Stegner and Thoreau. As writers they are altogether different animals and despite some broadly concurring views of humanity, nature, and culture (but not of society), it's hard to imagine two more temperamentally incompatible figures.

Yet given *Walden*'s primacy in the American tradition of literary withdrawal narratives, we should not be surprised that Stegner's novel came to Walter Harding's attention in the first place through the agency of a review in the *New York Herald-Tribune* that had labeled it "a WALDEN of the plains."[10] The reviewer overstated the matter, to be sure. The most obvious similarities between the works are partial and to some extent superficial, yet they are also far from insignificant in other ways. When Stegner eventually recognized "the Thoreauvian dilemma" as the "essential problem" of his protagonist, the alienated romantic and would-be hermit-poet Edwin Vickers, he also understood, if belatedly, that in a very real sense he was "invading Walden": "Even though I did not consciously walk in Thoreau's footsteps in the novel, I immediately recognized what I had done when it began to take shape." The upshot,

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Stegner readily agrees in retrospect, is that "Darkling Plain stems from Walden."[11]

If not quite on the same level of accomplishment as these classics, Stegner's *On a Darkling Plain* thus joins Henry Beston's *Outermost House* (1928) and Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac* (1949) among works of "retreat literature" from the early- to mid-20th century which "should be seen," in Lawrence Buell's words, "as Thoreauvian documents even though they make little reference to Thoreau. Whether in fact it was Thoreau or some entirely different constellation of forces that prompted these 'Thoreauvian' experimenters is ultimately less important than how his image as pastoral hermit gave public shape and articulation to other such ventures, whatever their actual impetus."[12] Buell's exposition of this tradition is limited largely to biographical and autobiographical narratives (that is, works of non-fiction) that depend conventionally upon what he terms the "plot of relinquishment." Yet his list of notable works from the second half of the century that extend this tradition include the likes of Edward Abbey's *Desert Solitaire* (1968) and Annie Dillard's *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* (1974),[13] texts that clearly challenge conventional understandings of non-fiction (much as *Walden* does) as a literature of factual narrative unsullied by artifice or fictional invention. This fact suggests that fictional texts are as suitable as biographical or autobiographical texts (if less frequently employed) as vehicles for a literature of relinquishment. Indeed *On a Darkling Plain* involves precisely the kind of voluntary simplicity narrative Buell highlights as one of two principle forms (or types) of relinquishment that have captivated the imaginations of American environmental writers since Thoreau[14]—almost, I might add, as ritually reenacted plots or narrative points of departure.

On a Darkling Plain follows the better part of a year in the life of Edwin Vickers as he lives alone in a hovel purpose-built for an eremitic existence on the open prairie of Saskatchewan. It is spring 1918. A casualty of the Second Battle of Ypres (1915) and the Battle of Vimy Ridge (1917) in the Great War, Vickers has been sent home with shrapnel wounds and lungs damaged from German gas attacks, unfit for further duty. Yet he considers society even less fit for him to rejoin. Rather than return to his affluent family in Vancouver, the young veteran sets out on his own to build a sod hut and stake a homestead for himself in the middle of the open prairie, five miles from his nearest neighbor, fifteen miles from the nearest town in Montana, and forty-five miles from Whitemud, the nearest Canadian village. Modeled on the small town of East End, Saskatchewan, where Stegner spent his early childhood, the village of Whitemud is the novel's Concord. Vickers's limited experience of this small society matches in some respects the often less than flattering view of village life ushered forth by Thoreau in *Walden*. If anything, Stegner's protagonist takes a far darker view of the greater human community, an exaggeration of Thoreau's *Walden* narrator at his crankiest: "human society was, and had always been, a miserable failure. Only by detaching themselves from society could human beings stay human; only as individuals, in isolation ... could they keep their dignity."[15]

The principal conflict in *On a Darkling Plain* is an eternal one. In the palliatives of solitude and nature, Edwin Vickers seeks spiritual restoration after the soul-crippling experiences of war. Similarities to the author-narrator of *Walden* are evident in any number of ways. A young poet who keeps a daily journal, Vickers builds his own hovel (with the help of a distant neighbor). "The walls were dirt, the floor dirt. He would share the snugness of his burrow with spiders and bugs and mice. But that didn't matter. Reduce your wants to the minimum if you wanted to be content. And all he wanted was a shelter that he could retire to in bad weather."[16] He has a critical turn of mind—"Realities!... The only way to get at reality was to throw out everything that most people called reality"[17]—and in some respects a classic Thoreauvian personality. He keeps one book with him, an anthology of 19th-century poetry, disdaining to read the newspaper: " 'Papers,' Vickers said, 'are one of the things I came out here to get away from. There are too many crises in papers. You have to make up your mind every half hour. If you don't know about the crisis you don't have to make a decision, and it just passes quietly by.' "[18]

There are numerous other Waldenic nuances to *On a Darkling Plain* that need not be catalogued comprehensively. Yet there are also obvious departures from this well-established model. The longer Vickers remains on his own, the more he begins to experience self-alienation instead of spiritual healing; and extended solitude, monotony, and frustrated sexual desires begin to drive him to distraction, exacerbated by his obsessive thoughts for the teenage daughter of a neighboring homesteader.[19]

> A month ago, he reflected ruefully, the society of people that he had left behind had been the sickness, and he the health. A month ago it had been he and Matthew Arnold and the stars, learning to be themselves, living serenely, untroubled and sane. Now he was nervous, irritable even to himself, savage with ungratified desires and unresolved doubts. He fussed over the problem, trying to get it into his diary, feeling that if he could once get it started he should have whipped it. But the logic always came back and confronted him: If he couldn't find the peace, the sense of belonging, either among the people or alone, then he was at the point of denying the value of staying alive. The only real peace, apparently, was the mindless existence of earth and grass and wind, the sanity of unconsciousness.[20]

In 1991, as Walter Harding was preparing to step down as the Secretary of the Thoreau Society after fifty years in

that office, Wallace Stegner was preparing for publication a book that was destined to be his last, a fine collection of essays titled *Where the Bluebird Sings to the Lemonade Springs: Living and Writing in the West* (1992), which would go on to be shortlisted for the National Book Critics Circle Award. Stegner had Thoreau on his mind again because he was revising an essay that he'd published the year before on the history of environmental thought and activism for inclusion in this essay collection.[21] Thoreau figures prominently in the essay, as Stegner extols him for "[r]epudiating his countrymen's concerns—progress, betterment, accumulation—and their predatory habits in the wild," as well as for promoting a "notion of nature as having healing powers [that] has now the force of revealed truth." In Thoreau's writing, Stegner notes above all, "there is virtually every idea that later became gospel to the environmental movement." Beyond Thoreau's contributions to environmental thought, Stegner appreciates his seminal impacts on American nature writing: "the form of Thoreau's essays—rumination hung upon the framework of an outdoor excursion—has influenced virtually every nature writer since, from Burroughs and Muir to Wendell Berry, Edward Abbey and Barry Lopez."[22]

Wallace Stegner, ca. 1940s

Courtesy of the Special Collections Department, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah

These and other observations on Thoreau would seem to demonstrate a clear, if conventional, admiration on the part of Stegner for his intellectual and literary forebear from Concord. And yet there's more than meets the eye to Stegner's regard for the author of *Walden* and "Civil Disobedience," more to the "pervasive ... influence" he had acknowledged already before the Second World War. As it turns out, Stegner's view of Thoreau was ultimately affected by the very mixed bag of values the author of *Walden* had come to represent for so many in American culture. Some of these values (his passion for "wildness and the savage heart"[23]) Stegner applauded; others (like the ethos of rugged individualism) he debunked as self-serving, self-deluding, and inevitably destructive in their abiding appeal to the American popular imagination. Stegner's career as a writer involved a lifelong effort to negotiate these and other antithetical strains in American cultural history. Stegner is not necessarily paying Thoreau an undiluted tribute in his letter to Harding when he describes him as "certainly the fountainhead in American thought and American writing of that spirit of incorrigible independence, that isolated human atom fighting for its toehold in eternity, that we look back on now with nostalgia." Aesthetic enemy of the picturesque for its own sake, social realist in the tradition of Dreiser, Stegner guarded against the dangers of nostalgia and romantic individualism in virtually every line he wrote. Remarkably, the seeds of Stegner's ambivalence toward Thoreau and toward the cultural traits with which he identifies him are to be found already in his 1940 letter to Harding, but we find it expressed most cogently in one of the last essays he wrote.

It is an interesting coincidence that Stegner's two most focused and sustained commentaries on Thoreau came at the very beginning and then at the very end of his career. The first of these bookends is obviously the letter he wrote to Walter Harding in 1940; the other is the "Qualified Homage to Thoreau" Stegner made when he contributed an essay with this very title to *Heaven is Under Our Feet* (1991),[24] the anthology Don Henley and Dave Marsh edited as part of a concerted effort to save Walden Pond and its surroundings by raising public awareness about development plans threatening the ecosystem in the early 1990s. Lawrence Buell has aptly described Stegner's contribution to this volume as "unique ... in being astringent rather than encomiastic toward Thoreau"[25]—and as such, I would add that it does the volume no small credit.

Despite Stegner's rather bold claim that "virtually every idea that later became gospel to the environmental movement" exists in Thoreau's writings, he had noted in the same essay that these ideas never took the form of a "call to action—unless withdrawal is action."[26] In his final essay on Thoreau, Stegner is disinclined to view Thoreau's self-example as an appropriate way of inspiring action because his "experiment in spartan living fudged its declared restrictions, and ... the lessons Thoreau drew from it are therefore less persuasive than they sound."[27] The assertion finds support in such oft-cited facts as Thoreau's having squatted on Emerson's land and borrowed Alcott's axe. This particular argument is one of the pillars of the secondary canon of resistant readings of *Walden*, very nearly as old and time-honored as Thoreau's masterpiece itself.[28] From James Russell Lowell to Llewelyn Powys, down through Leon Edel, Hayden Carruth, Richard Bridgman, and beyond, this critique has earned pride of place in a tradition that seeks to debunk the putatively uncritical view of Thoreau as a wise and beneficent patron saint of nature and the all-sovereign individual. The built-in flaw to this particular line of criticism is that it is based on intelligence about Thoreau's life at Walden Pond that the author actually takes pains to provide for his readers in *Walden*. While the flaw does not necessarily invalidate the criticism, it does deprive the charge of some of its bite. Stegner actually reinvigorates the argument, not by pointing to any new or forgotten biographical evidence, but by doing what he does best,

constructing a thoughtful and measured argument that considers the author of *Walden* in a broader historical context—that is, in light of the very real cultural impacts of his life, his works, and his exploits (real or imagined) as nothing less than a folk hero who came to be emulated by thousands.

Stegner takes none of the *ad hominem* swipes at Thoreau that are now a hallmark of such oppositional commentary, what we might call the *op-ed school* of criticism. Still, I suspect his most strident criticisms of Thoreau would be likely to meet resistance from many confirmed Thoreauvians, especially if isolated from his larger argument in "Qualified Homage to Thoreau." For this reason I have no intention of addressing most of his numerous arguments and observations concerning Thoreau out of their original context, except as they help to illuminate the "Thoreauvian dilemma" in *On a Darkling Plain*. (To those who are so inclined, the essay is well worth reading in its entirety.)

"Instead of working to improve the world," Stegner paraphrases Thoreau, "one should try only to make oneself 'one of the world's worthies.' " Believing such advice to be motivated essentially by a constitutional "loner's aversion to society," Stegner seems to regard Thoreau as a contradiction of the most perturbing sort—an enlightened man apparently unconcerned with enlightening his neighbors, a man of genius hording his virtues to himself. Stegner arrives at a revealing if contentious conclusion, that "[c]ivil disobedience came easier to Thoreau than to most people because he never cared much for the civil aspects of life in the first place. His antisocial stance is very American, like his independence, but it is less a philosophical position than a temperamental dislike of influence and control."[29]

As this last statement demonstrates, Stegner's observations on Thoreau usually build into larger cultural interpretations or assertions, rather than descending into the politics of personality, and in this respect he differs from most of Thoreau's oppositional critics. This tendency is a by-product, no doubt, of Stegner's considerable experience as a historian. It is this tendency that leads him to speculate on the greater cultural consequences of Thoreau's temperamental leanings. "[Thoreau's] demonstration of how little it takes to live, and live healthily and well, stirs the mind. So does his demonstration of how far personal independence will take us. Over the past 140 years thousands of people, singly or in couples, have taken off to places where they can escape the rat-race, own their horizon, live close to nature, and subsist on fish and mooseburgers. Thoreau was the model for most of them, probably."[30] The last assertion may overstate the matter somewhat, but not in a way that is likely to provoke incredulity. In his essay "The Sense of Place," first published in 1986, Stegner describes one extreme version of this Thoreauvian type: "That romantic atavist we sometimes dream of being, who lives alone in a western or arctic wilderness, playing Natty Bumppo and listening to the loons and living on moose meat and moving on if people come within a hundred miles, is a very American figure but he is not a full human being. He is a wild man of the woods, a Sasquatch."[31] The detail *listening to the loons* seems to me a fairly obvious intertext to one of *Walden*'s more memorable episodes,[32] while the phrase *living on moose meat* projects ahead to Stegener's mooseburgers reference in "Qualified Homage." And there are numerous other points of intersection, most significantly in the figure of the Sasquatch. In "Qualified Homage" what Stegner claims to miss in Thoreau, "as I missed it in the more extreme rebels of the 1960s, is the acknowledgement that their society shaped them, that without it every individual of them would be a sort of Sasquatch, a solitary animal without language, thought, tradition, obligation, or commitment. It is culture, tradition, that teaches us to be human, teaches us almost everything, including how to protest and what to protest about."[33] The Sasquatch is not Stegner's idea of the Thoreau narrator in *Walden*; no, this figure is his nightmare version of Thoreau as culturally received and amplified too far in one direction. "Easy and perhaps mistaken imitations of Thoreau's primitivism are tempting," Stegner had noted in his 1940 letter to Harding.[34] What is all but explicit in this observation is Stegner's acknowledgement that his protagonist Vickers has committed himself at the outset of *On a Darkling Plain* precisely to one such "mistaken imitation" of Thoreau. "I have an uncomfortable conviction," Stegner admits to Harding "that Thoreau wouldn't go all the way with my solution of the problem."[35] That solution remains unspecified, for it's there in the dramatic resolution of the novel, where Vickers's epiphany amounts to a repudiation of rugged individualism, an acknowledgement in the face of catastrophic tragedy,[36] that redemption is possible only through embracing one's community and through acting without deliberation on the human impulse for charity. It is a very unThoreauvian moment. "[Vickers] knew, as he had always known since Ypres, that in the comradeship of ruin there was a tempering of the spirit; the resiliency of humanity under the whip was justification for all its meanness."[37]

"Stegner's pen issued words that elucidate and illuminate the civic responsibility of the artist," observes Terry Tempest Williams. "He was more than a social commentator, dramatizing his beliefs through fiction. He understood writing as 'an act of consequence.' "[38] The rationale for Stegner's inversion of the Waldenic master narrative may be fully explicable only if we consider *On a Darkling Plain* against the history that had shaped his own understanding of individuals and communities, against the entire drift of his development as a writer and citizen. "Any reasonably long life, looked back upon, irresistibly suggests a journey," Stegner explains. "As a journey, my life has covered a good part of the twentieth century, and it has been quintessentially American, though it could not now be

reproduced: childhood on a belated and benighted frontier, youth in a provincial capital, maturity with the whole confused world to run in. And along with the expansion of my physical universe, a corresponding social and intellectual expansion; for as a child I knew little beyond the atomic, migrant western family that pursued an American dream already over for almost everyone else, and pursued it sometimes beyond the boundaries of the law. I had a long way to go, and the faster I traveled, the faster the world rolled under me and the further I got from the primitive, deprived, barren, lawless, and sometimes idyllic condition from which I started."[39]

There is not one "Thoreauvian dilemma" in *On a Darkling Plain*, but two. The first is the classic balancing act between a life of solitary independence and self-determination, on the one hand, and one of social responsibility and engagement on the other. One pole in the dichotomy is the village, the other pole is the lonely sod hut on the plain, the analogue of Thoreau's simple house in the woods. It matters little whether Vickers's hermitage stands five miles or merely one from its nearest neighbor, forty-five miles or two from the village center; the iconography of *Walden* ensures a fairly settled meaning for that lonely island hovel surrounded by rolling seas of prairie. It matters just as little whether the natural environs surrounding it are open plains or second-growth forest: nature in the American popular imagination tends to be viewed, perversely, as the absence of human community. One cabin is a lonely pioneer outpost in harmonious accord with nature. Unless one of them happens to be an outhouse, two cabins might as well be a city. And this leads us to the second Thoreauvian dilemma in *On a Darkling Plain*. This dilemma is faced not by Edwin Vickers, but by his creator—it is the quandary Thoreau causes for Stegner. The primitivism Stegner associated with one culturally amplified version of Thoreau is precisely what Edwin Vickers rejects in *On A Darkling Plain*, for it is the pipedream he had romantically sought out, only to learn that "Men are brothers for life lived, and are hurt for it." The logic of this dramatic resolution implicates Stegner in the politics of that choice.

Yet there is never any question but that Stegner is deeply respectful of Thoreau, an ardent admirer. "He could be wrong, as I have surlily tried to demonstrate; but when he was right he was often spectacularly right, and he was, right or wrong, American to the marrow."[40] In the end Stegner is devoted to the very idea of wildness that the author of *Walden* had given such resonant cultural expression.

> One cannot imagine him as a hunter; he thought every creature was better alive than dead. He loved and studied, not always accurately but devotedly, the creatures of the woods and rivers and ponds around Concord, Massachusetts. From a rustic American base, he strove to look to the edges of the known world, and beyond. Though his life could have been illustrated by the half-tamed, half-wild landscapes of the Hudson River painters, his imagination could not. It demanded the utterly wild, free scenes of a Bierstadt or a Moran.[41]

The signs of Stegner's lifelong ambivalence toward Thoreau are there to be seen in *On a Darkling Plain*, for at the heart of that ambivalence is Wallace Stegner's own Thoreauvian dilemma—his lover's quarrel with the tradition he both embraces and repudiates in different ways. Thoreau may be the "fountainhead" of an American tradition of "incorrigible independence," as he writes in his letter to Harding, the archetype of the "isolated human atom fighting for its toehold in eternity"; but "*the problem changes when the atoms get too thick*," even if "the impulses are still there." To that extent, Stegner claims, he is "also a 'disciple' of Thoreau."[42] He is careful to qualify this in any number of ways, not least in his "uncomfortable conviction that Thoreau wouldn't go all the way with [his] solution of the problem."[43] Nothing better sums up Stegner's sense of his own intellectual, spiritual, and cultural indebtedness to Thoreau—nor his obligation to dissent from the great dissenter—than the last lines of his "Qualified Homage to Thoreau." When Walden Pond is dedicated, he says, "I will go there and walk the shore arguing with Thoreau's ghost. But I will go there."[44]

Notes

[1] Wallace Stegner, Letter to Walter Harding, 14 July 1940 (see *Thoreau Society Bulletin* 251, pp. 3–4).

[2] Unfortunately the dates of publication specified for *both* of these works in the first installment of this article were incorrect. This installment corrects those errors.

[3] Wallace Stegner, Foreword to *Collected Stories of Wallace Stegner* (New York: Random House, 1990), p. x.

[4] Wendell Berry, as quoted in Jackson J. Benson, *Wallace Stegner: His Life and Work* (New York: Viking, 1996), p. 263.

[5] Stegner, Letter to Harding.

[6] Stegner, as quoted in Benson, *Wallace Stegner: His Life and Work*, p. 96. Stegner was so unenamored of this early work that, as Benson says, he "refused to allow [the novel] to be reprinted" during his lifetime. It is worth noting, however, that the novel has received very favorable comment from Nobel laureate Sinclair Lewis, poet and novelist James Dickey, and novelist and countercultural icon Ken Kesey. As I reported in the first installment of this article, plans are moving forward to reissue this novel for the first time since its original publication.

[7] Archibald MacLeish, "Speech to those who say Comrade," in *Public Speech* (New York, 1936), unpaged; as cited in Forrest G. Robinson and Margaret G. Robinson, *Wallace Stegner* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1977), p. 171, n. 3. First published serially in *Redbook* in 1939 under the title *Clash by Night*, the novel would appear in book form one year later from Harcourt Brace and Company with some significant modifications; besides those outlined by Stegner in his letter to Harding, one of the most significant changes was the new title, *On a Darkling Plain*. Both titles derive from "Dover Beach," originally published in Matthew Arnold's *New Poems* (London: Macmillan, 1867), now ubiquitously reprinted in anthologies of English literature.

[8] Stegner, Letter to Harding.

[9] Wendell Berry, "A Few Words in Favor of Edward Abbey," in *What Are People For?* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1990), p. 40.

[10] Milton Rugoff, Review of *On a Darkling Plain*, *New York Herald-Tribune*, "Books" Section, 11 February 1940, as cited in Walter Harding, Letter to Wallace Stegner, 6 July 1940 (see *Thoreau Society Bulletin* 251, p. 5).

[11] Stegner, Letter to Harding.

[12] Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing and the Formation of American Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1995), p. 326.

[13] Buell, *The Environmental Imagination*, p. 326; see also Buell's provocative discussion of the *aesthetics of relinquishment* (pp. 143–179).

[14] Buell, *The Environmental Imagination*, pp. 144–145.

[15] Wallace Stegner, *On a Darkling Plain* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1940), p. 68.

[16] Stegner, *On a Darkling Plain*, p. 31.

[17] Stegner, *On a Darkling Plain*, p. 73.

[18] Stegner, *On a Darkling Plain*, p. 97.

[19] Vickers is only 20 years old himself.

[20] Stegner, *On a Darkling Plain*, pp. 110–111.

[21] Wallace Stegner, "A Capsule History of Conservation," in *Where the Bluebird Sings to the Lemonade Springs* (New York: Random House, 1992); originally published in slightly different form as "It All Began with Conservation," *Smithsonian* 21, no. 1 (April 1990): 35–43.

[22] Stegner, "It All Began with Conservation," pp. 37–38.

[23] Wallace Stegner, *The American West as Living Space* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1987), p. 74.

[24] Wallace Stegner, "Qualified Homage to Thoreau," in *Heaven Is Under Our Feet*, eds. Don Henley and Dave Marsh, (Stamford, Conn.: Longmeadow Press, 1991), pp. 288–292.

[25] Buell, *The Environmental Imagination*, p. 532, n. 47.

[26] Stegner, "It All Began with Conservation," p. 37.

[27] Stegner, "Qualified Homage to Thoreau," p. 290.

[28] I am indebted to Henrik Otterberg for his notion of a secondary canon of criticism and interpretation that accrues around a much-discussed work like *Walden* (or around an element of that work); see his "Hound, Bay Horse and Turtle Dove," *The Concord Saunterer*, N.S. 12-13 (2004-2005): 224–280.

[29] Stegner, "Qualified Homage to Thoreau," p. 290.

[30] Stegner, "Qualified Homage to Thoreau," p. 290.

[31] Wallace Stegner, "The Sense of Place," in *Where the Bluebird Sings to the Lemonade Springs*, p. 200.

[32] See Henry D. Thoreau, *Walden* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. 1971), pp. 233–236.

[33] Stegner, "Qualified Homage to Thoreau," p. 289.

[34] Stegner, Letter to Harding.

[35] Stegner, Letter to Harding.

[36] A devastating local outbreak of the flu during the 1918 influenza pandemic.

[37] Stegner, *On a Darkling Plain*, p. 230.

[38] Terry Tempest Williams, "Wilderness Conversation," in *Wallace Stegner and the Continental Vision*., ed. Curt Meine (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1997), pp. 213–214.

[39] Wallace Stegner, Foreword to *Collected Stories of Wallace Stegner* (New York: Penguin, 1990), pp. ix–x.

[40] Stegner, "Qualified Homage to Thoreau," p. 292.

[41] Stegner, "It All Began with Conservation," p. 37.

[42] Stegner, Letter to Harding; emphasis added.

[43] Stegner, Letter to Harding.

[44] Stegner, "Qualified Homage to Thoreau," p. 292.

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www.shopatwaldenpond.org

"Words that Burn": Early Testimony of Thoreau's Genius

James Dawson

The 12 August 1854 issue of the weekly *National Anti-Slavery Standard* published extracts from an early version of Thoreau's "Slavery in Massachusetts" speech, which he had delivered in Framingham, Massachusetts, on the Fourth of July 1854. That newspaper's fiery preface to the extracts, under the title "Words That Burn" and possibly written by the editor at that time, Sydney Howard Gay (1814–1888), constitutes an early recognition of Thoreau's unique genius. Although scholars have quoted from the brief preface, it is not widely enough known and deserves to be reprinted in full.

The *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, the official organ of the American Anti-Slavery Society, headquartered at 142 Nassau Street in New York City, was published jointly at the New York headquarters and at the office of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society on 31 N. Fifth Street, Philadelphia. The preface appears on p. 1, Thoreau's extracts on pp. 1–2.

WORDS THAT BURN.

AMONG the speakers at Framingham, Mass., on the recent Fourth of July, was Mr. HENRY D. THOREAU, a sort of literary recluse, who is understood to inhabit a small hut, in an out-of-the-way place, in Concord, Mass., and to be in close affinity with Emerson. We have heard him spoken of, rather contemptuously, as a mere satellite and imitator of that erudite and transcendental philosopher; but we shall hereafter count such imputations as little better than profanity, and resent them with our whole stock of virtuous indignation. Mr. Thoreau has no need to perch himself on another's shoulders, or to fill his lamp with another's oil. We own that we had quite overlooked his Framingham speech until a friend, who knew what was in the man, assured us that it was eminently worthy of our attention. We are sure the readers of the STANDARD will share our gratitude to that friend, and we hope they will also pardon the dullness that needed such a reminder, when they have perused the extracts which follow.

Another "New" Thoreau Letter

Bradley P. Dean

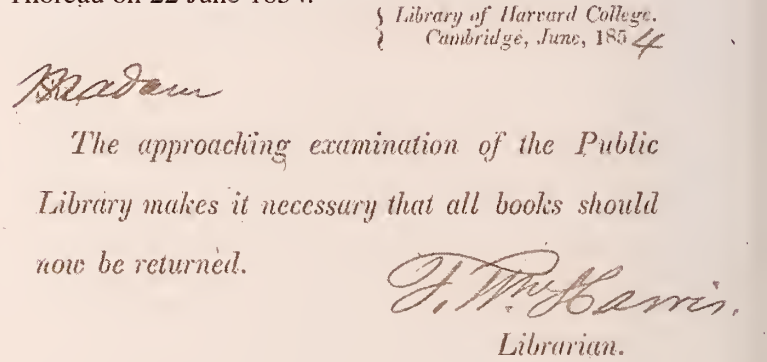
In *Thoreau Society Bulletin* No. 246 (Winter 2004) I reported on a "new" Thoreau letter discovered in a book I had checked out of the Harvard College Library in January 2002. Thoreau wrote that letter on 27 December 1850 to Harvard College Librarian, Dr. Thaddeus William Harris (1795-1856). In the very next number of the *Bulletin* (No. 247, Spring 2004), Ronald Wesley Hoag reported on another "new" Thoreau letter that he had purchased from a rare-book dealer in June of 1996. That letter, dated 29 April 1851, was also written by Thoreau and directed to Harris.

Recently, while researching Thoreau's borrowings from the Harvard College Library, I discovered yet another "new" Thoreau letter. Unlike those earlier two, this one was written *by* Harris *to* Thoreau. Strangely, though, this latest "new" letter does not exist—or at least is not extant. Properly speaking, I discovered not the letter but very clear *evidence* of a letter dated "June, 1854" and sent to Thoreau by Harris on Thursday, 22 June 1854. But Dr. Harris actually only wrote *part* of the letter; in fact, he wrote a single numeral, "4," and signed his name before posting the letter to Thoreau. What's more, Harris posted the same letter to almost thirty other non-student library patrons that same day. (Yes, it was a form letter.) Because he and Thoreau were fairly regular correspondents, met on those occasions when Thoreau visited the library in Cambridge, and shared several professional interests (e.g. entomology, botany, ethnology, New England history), Harris may also have added a note to the copy of the form letter he sent to Thoreau; but of course we would only come to know of such a note if the letter itself were to come to light.

The "Library Charging Lists" of the Harvard College Library for the period 1849–1861 are housed in the Archives of Harvard University, Shelf List UA III 50.15.60. Thoreau's borrowings for the 1853–1854 academic year are recorded on the top half of p. 122 in the volume titled, naturally enough, "1853–1854," which records all of that year's withdrawals by those who had the right to withdraw books (e.g. students, faculty, administrators) and those others who, like Thoreau, had secured permission to borrow books from the library (mostly clergymen living in the Boston-Cambridge area).

On Tuesday, 9 May 1854, Thoreau had borrowed three books from the library—"Heckewelder's Narrative" (Reverend John Gottlieb Ernestus Heckewelder [1743-1823], *A Narrative of the Mission of the United Brethren among the Delaware and Mohegan Indians, from Its Commencement in the Year 1740, to the Close of the Year 1808...* [Philadelphia: M'Carty & Davis, 1820]); "Anc[t]. Sea Margins" (Robert Chambers [1802-1871], *Ancient Sea-Margins, as Memorials of Changes in the Relative Level of Sea and Land* [Edinburgh: W. & R. Chambers..., 1848]); and "Tanner's Residence among the Indians" [John Tanner [1780?-1847], *A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner ... during Thirty Years Residence among the Indians...* [New York: G. & C. & H. Carvill, 1830])—and the citations for these borrowings end that academic year's record of Thoreau's borrowings. But written diagonally in pencil underneath the final citation, the one for the Tanner book, is a two-line note in Harris's handwriting: "Notif[d] / June 22." Similar pencil notes appear underneath the borrowing lists of thirty-six other non-student library patrons. Of those, twenty-nine specify "June 22" as the date that a notification was mailed to a patron.

Fortunately, Harris placed two copies of his "notification" form letter in the "Library Charging List" volume for 1853–1854. One of the letters is bound into the volume at p. 7. The other is laid in at p. 176 and appears here through the courtesy of the Harvard University Archives. Obviously Harris directed or planned to direct this particular letter to a female patron and therefore wrote "Madam" over the printed "*Sir,*"; in all other particulars, we may assume, this letter duplicates the one Harris sent Thoreau on 22 June 1854.



Library of Harvard College.
Cambridge, June, 185 4

Madam

The approaching examination of the Public Library makes it necessary that all books should now be returned.

T. W. Harris.
Librarian.

For a Time as Shifting as Sand: *Walden* in the United Arab Emirates

Jeremy Bendik-Keymer

This Spring, I taught *Walden* in my Introduction to Philosophy class at American University of Sharjah. The students here come from fifty countries, most hailing from the Middle East, Africa, South and West Asia, and countries of the former Soviet Union. Most are Muslim, with many Hindus and Christians as well. Sharjah adjoins Dubai, which is one of the most rapidly developing cities in the world and seems destined to become the vacationing, banking, and media hub for the region. There are so many five-star hotels in Dubai that a large table of people could not count them on their hands together. Every third or fourth car is a BMW, a Mercedes, or a new Porsche S.U.V. The capital of the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.), Abu Dhabi, has one of the largest oil reserves in the world. The U.A.E.

was founded thirty-five years ago, and fifteen years ago it boasted just a few high-rise buildings. Today its skyline looks increasingly like Chicago's, only with a subtle blend of Islamic themes amidst its prevailing modernism. The labor for all this development comes mostly from the poor areas of South Asia and the Philippines.

Usman is a brilliant student who carries a book around in his pocket even to the mall. He writes in one of his journal entries that a book is *his* Walden Pond. On the last day of reading Henry David's book about his "experiment," we listened to "Nonaah" by the Art Ensemble of Chicago and to "Six Pianos" by Steve Reich. We discussed experimentation and innovation as part of an American culture to which Thoreau's philosophy contributed. The discussion centered on Thoreau's appropriation of Socrates and his subversion of American colonialism: "*Explore* thyself." We discussed how modern Thoreau was when he encouraged a *new* awakening, a new form for society like the winged life emerging from the apple tree table. After class, Usman commented that he did not feel the discussion would resonate deeply with people from the Middle Eastern, Muslim world.

Usman, who knows both the Qu'aran and Shakespeare well—the Qu'aran exceptionally—said that the push to articulate the new felt counterintuitive to Qu'aranic anchoring. Among Sunni Muslims (the vast majority of Muslims in the U.A.E.), he said, the archetypes for both self and society have been seen. They are in the Prophet Mohammed and in the society which he founded and in which he lived. Exploration and innovation suggest a departure from the anchor of these joined archetypes. One does not need to find something as yet undiscovered nor to make something new. Rather, one should imitate what has been Revealed and is very old.

Usman is not what *Americans* call a "fundamentalist," and the spiritual direction he described is not that of a Luddite. He was trying to explain why explorers and innovators may fall flat for a culture to whom the archetypes have been revealed. Yet at the same time, he and everyone in the U.A.E. are aware of the incessant innovation and exploration in the region. On a spot where a year ago was sand, you now find the Ibn Battota mall—named after the great Muslim explorer and neighboring an area of Dubai where some thirty high rises are currently being built at once. You can enjoy Starbucks coffee under the vast dome of the tiled Iranian court. Meanwhile, just earlier this year, the neighboring Qatar announced the largest natural gas dome *discovery* in recent history.

The U.A.E., Dubai especially, are among the most modern areas in the world. As a relative said, "the national bird is the construction crane." You can count hundreds of them from a decent skyscraper. So while the *moral* archetypes seem given and old, the material reality and popular culture of the U.A.E. are rapidly changing, and in ways far more radical than they were in Thoreau's day. Thirty-five years ago, this country was pure desert with some shell and mud homes.

My experience of teaching *Walden* at American University of Sharjah has been fascinating. Students immediately identified with Thoreau's living spirituality. Yet having reached the end of the book, they were not jumping out of their seats at the message of experimentation. On the other hand, when Socrates refused to leave Athens in the *Crito*, students seemed inspired. As a rough judgment, I'd say students here find Thoreau's spiritual relation to nature familiar but not his modern search for a new, and individual, morality.

Our best day of the semester was when we discussed "The Ponds" chapter. The spiritual center of the book, this chapter opened a discussion as clear and profound as the ponds Thoreau described. Miray, a brilliant engineer, opened the class straight off by pointing out how the pond's nature discloses human nature. The discussion itself took on the character of clear, meditative thought moved by ripples each time a remark was made. We experienced a deepening of awareness as the class became quieter. Silence listened. It was an amazing experience—one of those perfect classes you remember. I believe the students were open to this area of Thoreau's writing and thought, in part because their culture places respect for nature among basic moral attitudes a human should have. That, too, is Muslim.

As I also discovered this semester by teaching environmental ethics and policy, there are many sources within Islam that foster respect for nature, far more than I have found in Christian tradition, where there are many but not quite so many. Here, young people go to the desert to spend their weekend nights, and although ecological literacy about cryptobiotic soil is limited, young and old people alike seem disposed to respect nature rather than think of it as mere stuff. Although there are massive consumption burdens in this country, they seem the result of ecological illiteracy and the dynamics of global capitalism more than of cultural presumption. Here Thoreau was inspiring.

For myself, I wonder whether Thoreau's deeply American "rock and roll"—the idea, not the assimilated media phenomenon—whether his innovation of tradition through experimental simplicity with pre-colonial echoes, whether the 19th-century liberal idea of experiments in living, will take hold. After all, he was discussing *moral* experimentation most of all. It seems to me that such an idea does not have a place here in the broad and full way Thoreau urged it. To permit such latitude to free experimentation would challenge the authority of Islam itself. The authority has been divinely given. It is not to be discovered by individualism.

Yet official policies are one thing, daily realities another. Where Thoreau does strike me as being relevant to people in the U.A.E. is at the level of what is actually going on culturally. Usman is right that, upon reflection, Thoreau's

tropes pull against the rationality of the region. But if you go to Dubai, Manama, Doha, or any of a number of other Gulf cities, you will see that *in fact* morals are changing. This is because the ideological power of material culture and exported American lifestyles are shaping a more self-gratifying people. I doubt the "self," thus gratified, is the kind of *self* Thoreau explored, but moral innovation will become a necessity for thoughtful people placed between such an emerging self-culture and official moral precepts. It's in *this* innovation Thoreau may be most helpful.

What we as a class noticed about Thoreau, and appreciated, was his way of maintaining ties to tradition while at the same time finding ways for tradition to grow. Thoreau may parody Christian teaching—for instance, when he suggests philanthropy can be a form of *not* loving one's neighbor—but he also repeats much of it in a modified form, for instance, when he suggests one cannot live on bread alone and so must find *one's own* truth that will set one free. He is an innovator who suggests continuity can be maintained with interpretive work. Here, Usman agreed. Even when we try to understand meaning taken as archetypal, we have to interpret it, and that interpretation cannot be had without the exploration of possibilities. Moreover, that interpretation cannot be *lived* without experimenting with those possibilities. Thoreau might help people faced with the task of moral innovation in a culture set in tension by one of the world's increasingly multiple modernities, and by the confusions and pathologies of the self engendered under capitalism.

It thus struck me as most interesting that people in class remained silent as to the elephant in the room during all of our discussion of Thoreau's "Economy." Why didn't the class focus on the U.A.E.'s economy? The U.A.E. is wealthy beyond all measure by virtue of the current global economy, especially the oil economy. Shouldn't this same economy risk heightening the disastrous pulls and pressures Thoreau criticized in the first chapter of *Walden*? Shouldn't it plow humans into the ground and give people over to lives of quiet desperation when they act like machines? I worry it risks silencing the desert's silence. Yet no one in this class of thirty intelligent students enjoying their free elective connected the dots to the gray beast. Why?

I believe there are two reasons. First, the economy has given so many here not only a more comfortable material life but greater global fluency and, for many, a chance to shape themselves more to their liking. This is true even for the most disadvantaged, who come here from Kerala, on India's southernmost tip, rather than remain unemployed. For this reason, Thoreau's particular liberality will not resonate in people's souls here until the tensions of self-gratification, and the exploitation of humans and nature, have placed more of a moral burden on the thoughtful person. Yet it is uncertain that a Thoreauvian moral burden *must* appear. This is because, secondly, family structure, and the stabilizing influence of ritual and widespread religion, are very strong in this region. Though self-gratification has begun to change people, it is unclear whether the answer to it will come from individualistic innovation. Here, family structure and religion are best suited to handle the matter.

Here is a final reason why I believe *Walden* may not be most vibrant in this culture. *Walden* is a very solitary book and the solutions it reaches are not reached through human community. In the U.A.E., community is the great counterbalancing power to the tensions of material self-gratification. Perhaps, then, we need a Thoreau of community.

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The New John Brown Biography: A Review

Sandra Harbert Petrulionis

John Brown Abolitionist: The Man Who Killed Slavery, Sparked the Civil War, and Seeded Civil Rights. David S. Reynolds. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005. 578 pp. ISBN: 0375411887 $35.

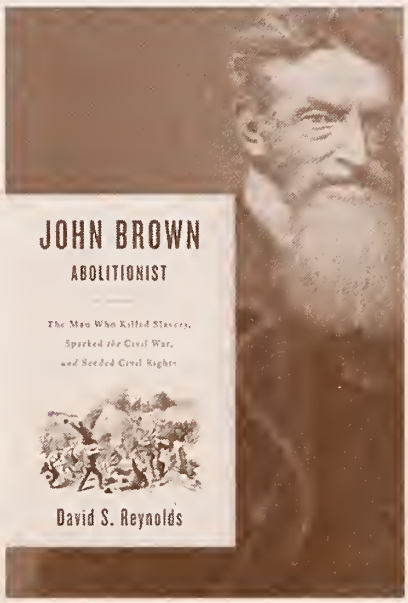
Of all the men who are said to be my contemporaries, it seems to me that John Brown is the only one who *has not* died. I meet him at every turn. He is more alive than ever he was.... John Brown has earned immortality." With this assertion in his journal three days after John Brown's public hanging for the crimes of treason, inciting slave insurrection, and murder, Henry Thoreau could not have realized how accurately he was writing for successive generations. The tense political atmosphere that

prevailed in most northern states in the decade preceding the Civil War had by 1859 brought political radicals and moderates alike together in Concord, Massachusetts. Many in town, including Thoreau and Emerson, memorialized Brown, the man whose war against proslavery terror in "Bleeding Kansas" they had subsidized for years. In his new cultural biography, *John Brown Abolitionist: The Man Who Killed Slavery, Sparked the Civil War, and Seeded Civil Rights*, award-winning literary scholar David S. Reynolds places Brown in the context of a century when, in our "nation, under God ... with liberty and justice for all," four million human beings were held hostage by legally sanctioned terrorists whose rights to their human property had long been sustained by chief executives and congressmen. It was a time when the country suffered a short supply of what Thoreau called "men of principle," but in his mind—and in Reynolds's portrayal—John Brown was an exception.

The scholarship on Brown and his October 1859 raid on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia is voluminous. Although more recent accounts such as Stephen Oates's and Merrill Peterson's strive for balance, earlier works by James Redpath, Franklin B. Sanborn, W. E. B. DuBois, Oswald Garrison Villard, Robert Penn Warren, and James C. Malin (to name but a few) reflect a Brown inevitably veiled by their authors' prejudices. What, then, should we expect from a "cultural biography?" To begin, we should relax our expectations for another chronological rendering of Brown's life. While the familiar details are here—the Puritan upbringing, his early sympathy for and exploits on behalf of black slaves, his marriages and children, the multiple business fiascos, the notorious years in "Bleeding Kansas"—Reynolds's story is as much about the political cauldron that was antebellum America as it is about Brown himself.

Members of the Thoreau Society don't need to be told, of course, that Henry Thoreau was among the first in the nation to voice the legend-engendering rhetoric that established Brown's iconic status. Earlier biographers have noted the personal connection between the Transcendentalists and Brown; the Kansas veteran had visited and spoken in Concord twice, the last time just months before Harpers Ferry. But Reynolds claims more for this relationship, stating categorically that "without the Concord Transcendentalists, John Brown would have had little cultural impact" (4), that "in the early going, it was the Transcendentalists alone who rescued him from infamy and possible oblivion" (344). Further, Reynolds argues that "the Concord philosophy must be recognized as a force behind the events that led to the Civil War" (215). No surprise to Thoreauvians, Reynolds credits Henry Thoreau with making "the earliest and boldest moves on behalf of Brown" (344). "Thoreau alone," Reynolds reminds us, "took the risk of publicly defending the 'insane' Brown and his 'deluded' followers" (346). Reynolds also assesses the Transcendentalists' increasing tolerance for violence in the abolitionist struggle, finding in Oliver Cromwell a "historical prototype" for the philosophers' embrace of Brown (224). Particularly in the speeches and actions of radical Unitarian ministers Theodore Parker and Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Reynolds finds that "Transcendentalism went hand in hand with a militant reform stance" (218).

Reynolds does not shrink from the disturbing realities attendant with any study of Brown. In a lengthy chapter, he deals with the murders at Pottawatomie Creek, Kansas that left five unarmed proslavery settlers dead the night of 24 May 1856. Although he doesn't vindicate Brown for this encounter, Reynolds does offer more information than have previous studies about the war that raged on the "Free Kansas" front during the mid 1850s. What emerges is a clearer understanding of the Pottawatomie victims as Brown himself viewed them at the time. For Brown, these men were the foot soldiers in a clear struggle between legal yet illegitimate proslavery forces and the justice of the increasingly desperate antislavery cause. On this and other issues, Reynolds augments the footnotes of previous biographies, supplying details that nicely complicate the historical record. This more comprehensive story may change no one's mind regarding the Kansas atrocities—as Reynolds acknowledges, "it is hard to admire a cold-blooded killer"—but it does, as he contends, make "explainable" the violent attacks, given the "state of war and near anarchy" that existed there at the time (139).



Occasionally, with regard to abolitionist activities in Concord, Reynolds perpetuates some previously published inaccuracies. Thoreau delivered "A Plea for Captain John Brown" in Concord's First Church rather than Town Hall (346); and Harpers Ferry raider Francis Jackson Meriam was not in Canada but in Boston and Concord the day of John Brown's hanging (374). But these are quibbles. Additionally, given the disparate, loosely-organized nature of the Transcendentalists, characterizing them collectively as "distanced from him [Brown] in their racial attitudes" (221) seems unfair. At times Reynolds is so intent on valorizing Brown that other ardent abolitionists, including William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips, needlessly suffer in comparison. Most unrealistic is his characterization of Brown as a reformer ahead of his time on women's rights.

As Barbara Ehrenreich has also recently noted, it is a stretch to consider Brown a feminist, regardless of the anachronistic sense of that word when applied to the mid-nineteenth century. Brown was, after all, a largely absentee, Calvinistic father of twenty children. In his will, he bequeathed only bibles to his daughters as compared to money and other valuables to his sons, this despite the pivotal role played by sixteen year-old Annie Brown in the subterfuge that enabled the Harpers Ferry raid.

At a Thoreau Society excursion to Harpers Ferry last year, one participant reflected that John Brown is "saying something to us today, but I still don't know what it is." In the final chapters of his book, Reynolds valuably contributes to this ongoing dialogue and revitalizes Brown's bearing on our current global dilemma. After reviewing the numerous ways that both sides symbolically wielded the legend of John Brown during the Civil War and Reconstruction, Reynolds discusses this image in light of Timothy McVeigh, Theodore Kascynksi, and Osama Bin Laden, reserving for Brown "a breadth of vision that modern terrorists lack" (503), quite an arguable claim. But Reynolds also asks the vexing question: "How can America, which regards terrorism as its greatest threat, admit to the fact that it was shaped by a terrorist of its own?" (500). The rub, of course, as he notes about John Wilkes Booth ("an angry terrorist" like Brown, "but in reverse" [479]), is that when moral imperative is exercised to justify violence, each side can lay claim to honorable motives. In his closing paragraphs, Reynolds usefully trades the biographer's narration for a cultural theorist's prescription. He insists that "America must be large enough to allow for meaningful protest, instead of remaining satisfied with patriotic bromides and a capitalist mass culture that fosters homogenized complacency" (505). Henry Thoreau would surely have agreed.

Notes & Queries

☞ We are grateful to the authors who contributed articles for this number of the *Bulletin*. **Sandra Harbert Petrulionis** teaches English at Penn State Altoona and is a member of the Society's Board of Directors. **Steven Hartman** teaches English at Växjö University in Sweden, writes fiction and scholarly works, and translates Swedish works into English. **Bradley P. Dean** edits this *Bulletin*. **James Dawson** lives in Trappe, Maryland, where he owns and operates Unicorn Bookshop. **Jeremy Bendik-Keymer** teaches in the Department of International Studies at American University of Sharjah.

☞ We see from a recent mail-order catalog that the Teaching Company has released a new series of thirty-six lectures by J. Rufus Fears, the David Ross Boyd Professor of Classics at the University of Oklahoma, where he holds the G. T. and Libby Blankenship Chair in the History of Liberty. The series, titled *Books That Have Made History: Books That Can Change Your Life*, includes thirty-minute lectures on the usual suspects, from Homer and certain books of The Holy Bible to Shakespeare and Goethe to John Stuart Mill and Orwell. Interestingly, aside from Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address," which is coupled with Pericles' *Oration*, *Walden* is the only American work represented in the series and the only American work to get its own half-hour lecture.

☞ A melancholy thought from Bill McKibben's *The End of Nature*: "Though Thoreau's writings grew in value and importance the closer we drew to the end of nature, the time fast approaches when he will be inexplicable, his notions less sensible to future men than the cave paintings are to us.... Soon Thoreau will make no sense. And when that happens, the end of nature—which began with our alteration of the atmosphere, and continued with the responses to our precarious situation of the 'planetary managers' and the 'genetic engineers'—will be final. The loss of memory will be the loss of meaning." McKibben goes on to suggest (if we read him correctly) that such losses would be coincident with the loss of a reason to live.

2006 Annual Gathering

Mountains, Seashores, and Moonlight: Thoreau's Exploration of Wildness

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Concord, Massachusetts

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Annual Gathering Committee
55 Old Bedford Road
Concord, MA 01742 U.S.A.
or
info@thoreausociety.org

☞ In the last number of the Bulletin we noted that a misquotation of Thoreau's "Wildness is the preservation of the world" passage had been attributed to Pulitzer-Prize-winning poet Gary Snyder, but we learn that, in fact, Snyder had correctly quoted the "Walking" passage and that the editor had altered the quotation from "Wildness" to "Wilderness."

☞ A hearty congratulations to Thoreau Society member David G. Fuller, who in April was inaugurated the eighth president of Minot State University in Minot, North Dakota. President Fuller selected as the motto for his inauguration "Faith ... Growth ... Wonder," on the basis of the passage from "Succession of Forest Trees": "Though I do not believe that a plant will spring up where no seed has been, I have great faith in a seed. Convince me that you have a seed there, and I am prepared to expect wonders."

☞ In April Bromer Booksellers of Boston was selling a single

page of Thoreau manuscript containing the June 1843 draft of Thoreau's poem "The Just Made Perfect" for the astonishing sum of US$38,500. No word yet on whether it has sold at that price.

☞ An article in the March 2005 issue of the magazine *Yankee* closes with the following paragraph: "Naturalists Scott and Helen Nearing believed sugar makers could eke out an existence of Thoreau-like simplicity. I dream of no such utopia. But sugaring can enable suburban dwellers to connect with seasonal cycles, refresh their sense of community, and steep themselves in something elemental, antique, exotic, and yet as practical as a backyard vegetable garden. One need not have a farm to feel some of agriculture's rhythm. Just find a.tree." The article is an excerpt from *The Last Undiscovered Place* (University of Virginia Press, 2004) by David K. Leff, who lives in a small town outside of Hartford, Connecticut, and makes an annual practice of tapping his and his neighbors' maple trees, with results that are sometimes exhilarating, sometimes sublime.

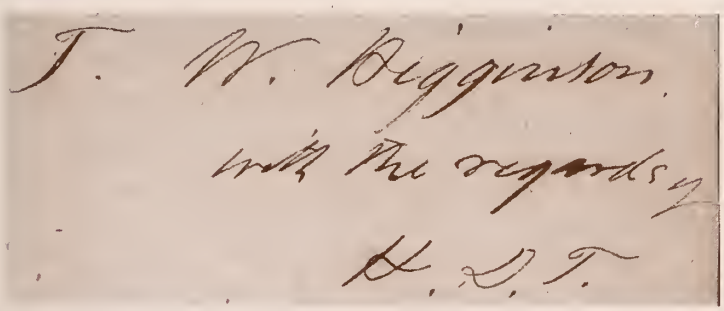
☞ The first sentence in the chapter on *Walden* in Denis Donoghue's latest book, *The American Classics: A Personal Essay*, refers to "The Pond in Spring" as one of "the few charming parts" of Thoreau's "abrasive" book (p. 137). Umm, the correct title of the *Walden* chapter is "The Pond in Winter." Although that is surely an inauspicious beginning, the chapter is worth reading.

☞ Donoghue mentions (parenthetically) in the aforementioned chapter on *Walden* that his "favorite among Thoreau's books" is *Cape Cod* (p. 163). We were fortunate, the day after reading Donoghue's chapter, to interview the famed linguist and philosopher Noam Chomsky, who mentioned during the interview in his M.I.T. office that *his* favorite Thoreau book is—yep, you guessed it—*Cape Cod*. Do we discern a trend here?

☞ At the end of a brilliant essay about the values of public television titled "A Moral Transaction" (http://www.tompaine.com/articles/20050620/a_moral_transaction.php and reprinted in the *Washington Post* on 21 June 2005), broadcast journalist Bill Moyers simply writes, "Henry Thoreau got it right: 'To affect the quality of the day, is the highest of the arts.' " (The word *that* should appear after the comma.)

☞ Thoreau's presentation copy to Orestes A. Brownson of *A Week* is featured in "Treasurers of Lauinger Library: An Exhibition for the Millenium" at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. The pages after p. 272 are uncut.

☞ On 29 June 2005 Thomas Wentworth Higginson's inscribed copy of *Walden; or, Life in the Woods* was sold at Christie's for an



astonishing US$216,000. Pre-sale estimates had ranged from US$20,000 to as much as US$30,000. The volume contains notes by Higginson. They must be some mighty fine notes!

☞ The sculptor Daniel Altshuler of Gloucester, Massachusetts, has produced bronze busts and bas-reliefs of Louisa May Alcott and Ralph Waldo Emerson, and he has recently produced an under-life-size bust of Thoreau, based on the 1856 Maxham image, that is available in bronze (US$5,000) or plaster (US$500). Altshuler was raised in Concord and is the son of Suzanne H. Altshuler, the late portrait artist and illustrator of Concord houses and landscapes. Ms. Altshuler was also one of the most ardent supporters of the Thoreau Lyceum, which closed a little more than a decade ago. For more information, visit http://www.sculpturesales.com or contact Daniel Altshuler at daltshuler@nii.net.

☞ From 3 October to 30 November this year the Concord Free Public Library will have a gallery exhibition on Elizabeth Peabody's Foreign Library. The display, titled "No Worthless Books," draws upon books Peabody gave the library in the late 1870s and highlights the history as well as the contents of the Foreign Library and some of the foreign influence on New England transcendentalists.

☞ From Sue Monk Kidd's *The Secret Life of Bees* (Penguin, 2002): "Next to Shakespeare I love Thoreau best. Mrs. Henry made us read portions of *Walden Pond*, and afterward I'd had fantasies of going to a private garden...."

☞ Amy Belden Brown's novel *Mr. Emerson's Wife* (St. Martin's, 2005) has Lidian falling in love with (as one reviewer phrases it) "her husband's dashing young protege, the manly and odd Henry David Thoreau." Something of a flap has developed (at least in Worcester, Mass.) over the novel's portrayal of Lidian and Thoreau engaging in a tryst, at least two Worcester readers opining that surely such an event could not possibly have occurred. Still, this novel—a work of historical fiction, after all—has been favored with several fairly good reviews.

☞ Emeritus professor of English at UC Berkeley and Thoreau critic (author of *Dark Thoreau*) Richard Bridgman died of cancer at his Oakland Hills, California, home on 17 January 2005 at the age of 77. See www.berkeley.edu/news/media/releases/2005/02/17_bridgmanobit.shtml for an obituary.

☞ A long essay by Donovan Hohn in the January 2005 issue of *Harper's* ("A Romance of Rust: Nostalgia, Progress, and the Meaning of Tools") includes these words near the end: "At some point in the 175 years that have elapsed since the French aristocrat [de Toqueville] came to have a look at the American experiment in democracy—perhaps when the frontier closed, or perhaps when men became, in Thoreau's words, 'the tools of their tools,' ... the future loosened its purchase upon our dreams."

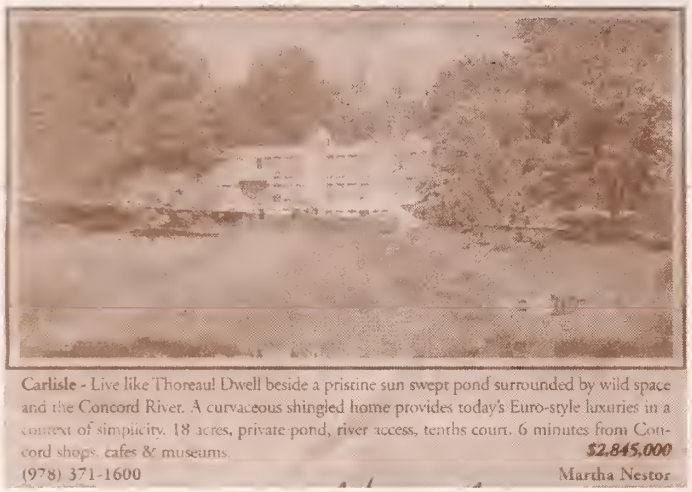
☞ A two-column item in the Dec./Jan. 2005 issue of Canadian magazine *The Walrus*, titled "Flake," depicts enlarged images of four snowflakes and then presents a paragraph beginning with these words: "Henry David Thoreau once wrote, 'Nature is full of genius, full of the divinity; so that not a single snowflake escapes its fashioning hand.' There is no doubt Thoreau would have pored over Wilson Alwyn Bentley's ice-flake photography...."

☞ *Why Is Corporate America Bashing Our Public Schools*, by Kathy Emery and Susan Ohanian (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heineman, 2004), ends with a paragraph that begins: "*Don't ride the bus. Don't drink the tea. Don't give the test*. Yes, the world is changed by individuals who have the ability to say 'No!' They say they're mad as hell [and] aren't going to take this any more. Maybe these folks still read and teach Henry David Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience*."

☞ In his book *Free Speech for Me—But Not for Thee* (HarperCollins, 1992), Nat Hentoff describes a case where two high-school students in Girard, Pennsylvania, "insisted they had a

right not to read [Studs Terkel's] *Working* as a matter of conscience." Hentoff says: "The two boys seem like heroes to me. It's what that heretic Henry David Thoreau used to say [sic], 'Let your life be a counter friction to stop the machine.' "

☞ Pierre Schaefer interviewed John Cage ("For the Birds," in *Hatred of Capitalism: A Reader* (Semiotext[e], 2001), and the two discussed music theory and sound. After Cage described a situation where "nothing is pre-determined, in which there are neither obligations nor prohibitions," Schaefer suggested, "A situation of anarchy?" Cage replied, "Of course! Thoreau pretty much described it when he replaced Jefferson's maxim, 'The best government is that government which governs least,' with his own, 'That government is best which governs not at all!' " The terminal exclamation mark is not Thoreau's.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A private Walden! This ad appeared in a Concord-area newspaper during the Annual Gathering

☞ Jonathan Waterman's *Where Mountains Are Nameless: Passion and Politics in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge: Including the Story of Olaus and Mardy Murie* (W.W. Norton, 2005) describes Olaus and Mardy Murie's life together around the Sheenjeck River in 1961. "Before leaving," Waterman writes, Olaus and Mardy walked over to the river. "They couldn't get enough of it, this remote Walden that had come to define their lives as modern-day Thoreaus. 'We looked and looked,' Mardy wrote, 'and then we looked through tears.' "

☞ "Cathedral Trail," a poem in Jon Andersen's collection *Stomp and Sing* (Curbstone Press, 2005), is one of several in the book set in Baxter State Park. It begins with a Thoreauvian epigraph: "I was deep within the hostile ranks of clouds, and all objects were obscured by them. Now the wind would blow out a yard of clear sunlight...."

☞ Richard Tayson's essay "The Casualties of Walt Whitman" (*Virginia Quarterly Review*, Spring 2005), about Whitman self-censorship apparent in changes he made to his poem "Live-Oak, with Moss" over the years, includes a paragraph quoting negative comments about *Leaves of Grass* from critics of Whitman's day. " 'It's as if the beasts spoke,' Thoreau famously wrote," Tayson avers—getting it wrong twice, if not three times. Thoreau wrote to Blake, "It is as if the beasts spoke." A Google search for "the beasts spoke" and "Thoreau" results in eleven hits, the fourth of which misquotes still differently: "Richard Sharp ... (When the secular Puritan, Thoreau, visited he said, 'It was as if the beasts spoke.') One is an ardent satyr, goat-bearded and hairy-hoofed; ... washingtonart.com/beltway/sharp.html."

☞ From Alyssa Ford's "Humanity: the remix: Is building a better human the key to utopia—or the world's most dangerous idea?" (*Utne* magazine, May/June 2005), in the context of discussing the ideas of James Hughes, author of *Citizen Cyborg* (Westview, 2004): "After World War II, with its gas chambers and atomic bombs, a long-dormant 'pastoral' left arose [sic] to prominence, closer in spirit to romantic thinkers like Whitman, Emerson, and Thoreau. Since then, [Hughes says], 'any kind of narrative of a radically transformed life through new technologies is immediately dismissed.' "

☞ From a review of Chris Dodge's chapbook *Grand Marais* in *Xerography Debt* #16: "Chris is our community Thoreau. He bridges the gap between the centuries and takes us with him on his journeys."

☞ A new "enlarged edition" of *Against Civilization: Readings and Reflections*, edited by John Zerzan (Los Angeles: Feral House, 2005), a book first published in 1999, includes a five-paragraph excerpt from "Walking," titled " 'Excursions (1863)' "—beginning with the paragraph that starts "I believe in the forest...." The excerpt was drawn from *Little Essays from the Works of Henry David Thoreau*, Charles R. Murphy, editor. Thoreau shares space here with Jean-Jacques Rousseau, anarchist writer Fredy Perlman, Chellis Glendenning, Unabomber, and neo-Luddite Francis Sales.

☞ Part I of *Last Child in the Woods: Why Children Need Nature, How It Was Taken from Them, and How to Get It Back*, by Richard Louv (Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books, 2005), titled "The New Relationship Between Children and Nature," begins with this epigraph: "*Here is this vast, savage, howling mother of ours, Nature, lying all around, with such beauty, and such affection for her children, as the leopard; and yet we are so early weaned from her breast to society, to that culture which is exclusively an interaction of man on man.*"

☞ From a chapter titled "The Meaning of Vicksburg" in Robert D. Kaplan's *An Empire Wilderness* (Random House, 1998): "Grant's *Personal Memoirs* ... is the archetypal American narrative, perhaps more so than Thoreau's *Walden* or Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, to which Edmund Wilson favorably compares it."

☞ From F. Schuyler Mathews's *Field Book of Wild Birds and Their Music* (Bedford, Mass.: Applewood Books), an undated reprint of the "Fifteenth Impression" of the 1904 edition, under the entry for cedar waxwing: "Mr. [Bradford] Torrey writes pleasingly about the almost unbroken silence of this bird's life, and adds: 'Of course I refer to the Waxwing whose faint, sibilant whisper can scarcely be thought to contradict the foregoing description. By what strange freak he has lapsed into this ghostly habit, nobody knows. I make no account of the insinuation that he gave up music because it hindered his success in cherry-stealing....' Mathews then writes that he places "the note of the average Waxwing at ... three tones beyond the limit of the piano," adding, "There is also a *burred* note, which Thoreau calls his 'beady note'...."

☞ From Chris Hoffman's *The Hoop & the Tree: A Compass for Finding a Deeper Relationship with All Life* (San Francisco,: Council Oak Books, 2000): "The early Latin meaning of the word *genius* was 'deity of generation and birth,' which later broadened into 'attendant spirit.' The Greeks had a similar concept of 'guiding spirit,' which they called *daimon* (from which English gets, with negative connotations, 'demon'). This daimon or genius is praised by Thoreau in *Walden*. 'Follow your genius closely enough,' he says, 'and it will not fail to show you a fresh prospect

every hour.... No man every followed his genius until it misled him' " (Hoffman's ellipses).

☞ A 1991 letter by librarian Sanford Berman, published in *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Sandy Berman but Were Afraid to Ask* (McFarland, 1995), addressed the case of Leigh Welper, a woman "charged with 'defacing government property' after she threw water-soluble, red paint on the Federal Courthouse ... during an antiwar protest." Berman asks a judge, one "Magistrate Cudd," to "undo an *in*justice" by immediately freeing Welper, saying that the act for which she was convicted "was clearly one of civil disobedience that did no damage to property ... precisely the sort of conscience-driven act that Henry David Thoreau practiced and propounded a century ago...."

☞ From "Call and Answer, August 2002," a poem in Robert Bly's *My Sentence Was a Thousand Years of Joy* (HarperCollins, 2005): "How come we've listened to the great criers—Neruda, Akhmatova, Thoreau, Frederick Douglass—and now / We're silent as sparrows in the little bushes?"

☞ *The Road of Excess: A History of Writers on Drugs* by Marcus Boon (Harvard UP, 2002), quotes extensively from Thoreau's journal entry of 12 May 1851, "after receiving ether during a visit to the dentist."

☞ Dan Neuharth's *Secrets You Keep From Yourself: How to Stop Sabotaging Your Happiness* (St. Martin's Griffin, 2004) notes that those who "attend, consciously and unconsciously, to fears rather than desires ... risk leading, as Thoreau wrote, a life of 'quiet desperation.' "

Please submit items for the Fall Bulletin to your editor before

1 October 2005

Additions to the Thoreau Bibliography

Robert N. Hudspeth

Akst, Daniel. "Buyer's Remorse." *Wilson Quarterly* 28, No. 1 (Winter 2004): 42–47. Thoreau and Horatio Alger, Jr. as examples of "Puritan ambivalence about wealth."

Branch, Michael P., Ed. *Reading the Roots: American Nature Writing Before* Walden. Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 2004. 408p. hardcover (ISBN 0820325473), $45.00. Reviewed by K. Jones in *Environment and History* 11, No. 1 (2005): 99–100 and by Ellen Riek in *American Notes and Queries*, 17, No. 4 (2004): 49.

Champion, Laurie. "'I Keep Looking Back to See Where I've Been': Bobbie Ann Mason's *Clear Springs* and Thoreau's *Walden*." *Southern Literary Journal* 36, No. 2 (Spring 2004): 47–58. "Mason confronts her personal and familial past for reasons similar to those of Thoreau's motive for going to Walden."

Coletto, Maria. "Walking Across Cape Cod: Thoreau's Spiritual Quest Through Poetry." *Annali di Ca' Foscari: Revista della Facolta di Lingue e Letterature Straniere dell'Universita di Venezia* 43, No. 1-2 (2004): 77–95.

Cramer, Jeffrey S. "The Washington Goode Petition in the Thoreau Society Collections." *Thoreau Society Bulletin* No. 251 (Spring 2005): 9–10.

Donoghue, Denis. "Walden," in *The American Classics: A Personal Essay*. New Haven and London.: Yale University Press, 2005. 304p. hardcover (ISBN 0300107811), $27.00. Pp. 137–176, 272–275.

Goodman, R. B. "The Colors of the Spirit: Emerson and Thoreau on Nature and the Self." *Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy* 42 (2004): 1–18.

Hartman, Steven. " 'Invading *Walden*,' Part I: An Exchange between Walter Harding and Wallace Stegner." *Thoreau Society Bulletin* No. 251 (Spring 2005): 1–7.

Iverson, Jennifer. "Ives Reworks Thoreau: Charles Ives' Interpretation of Thoreau in 114 Songs and Essays Before a Sonata." *Publications of the Missouri Philological Association* 27 (2002-2003): 66–75.

Johnson, Linck C. "Emerson, Thoreau's Arrest, and the Trials of American Manhood," in *The Emerson Dilemma: Essays on Emerson and Social Reform*. Ed. T. Gregory Garvey. Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 2001. Pp. 35–64.

Köster, Dörte, et al. "Paleolimnological Assessment of Human-Induced Impacts on the Nutrient Balance of Walden Pond (Massachusetts, USA) during the Last Three Centuries Using Diatoms and Stable Isotopes." *Aquatic Ecosystem Health and Management* 8, No. 2 (2005): 117–131.

Leach, Susan Llewelyn. "Walden Still Inspires Conservation." *Christian Science Monitor*, 22 June 2005. On the work of photographer Scot Miller.

Matzke, Jason P. "The John Brown Way: Frederick Douglass and Henry David Thoreau on the Use of Violence." *Massachusetts Review* 46, No. 1 (2005): 62–75.

May, David. "A Word About ... Henry David Thoreau." *Review and Expositor* 101, No. 3 (2004): 365–368.

Miceli, Thomas J. "The Profitability of Thoreau's Walden Experiment." *Thoreau Society Bulletin* No. 251 (Spring 2005): 7–9.

Morgan, Jack. "Thoreau's 'The Shipwreck' (1855): Famine Narratives and the Female Embodiment of Catastrophe." *New Hibernia Review/Iris Eireannach Nua: A Quarterly Record of Irish Studies* 8, No. 3 (Autumn 2004): 47–57.

Newman, Lance. *Our Common Dwelling: Henry Thoreau, Transcendentalism, and the Class Politics of Nature*. Reviewed by Laura Dassow Walls in *Thoreau Society Bulletin*, No. 251 (Spring 2005): 10–11. "Newman integrates [the questions of how to relate Thoreau's natural history with his political writings] seamlessly, and in so doing recasts not just Thoreau but American Romanticism, and the potential for nature writing to address the deepest challenges of our time."

Palmer, Scott. "Why Go Straight? Stepping Out with Henry David Thoreau's 'Walking' and Edward Thomas's *The Icknield Way*." *ISLE* 12, No. 1 (Winter 2005): 115–129.

Philippon, Daniel J. "Thoreau's Notes on the 'Journey West': Nature Writing or Environmental History?" *ATQ: The American Transcendental Quarterly* ns 18, No. 2 (June 2004): 105–117. On Thoreau's trip to Minnesota and his notes.

Reynolds, David S. *John Brown, Abolitionist: The Man Who Killed Slavery, Sparked the Civil War, and Seeded Civil Rights*. New York: Knopf, 2005. 592p. hardcover (ISBN

0375411887), $35.00. Many references to Thoreau.

Saito, Naoko. "Citizenship without Inclusion: Religious Democracy After Dewey, Emerson and Thoreau." *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 18 (2004): 203–215. Citizenship and the ethics of perfectionism.

Schopp, Joseph C. "A World in Flux: Thoreau's Meditations by the Sea," in *The Sea and the American Imagination*. Ed. Klaus Benesch, Jon K. Adams, and Kerstin Schmidt. Tübingen, Germany: Stauffenberg, 2004. 280p. hardcover (ISBN 3860573470).

Segura, Debra A. "Championing This Nature 'So Rife with Life': Ecological Consciousness in *Walden*." *Journal of the Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association* 102 (November 2004): 105–125.

Viragos, Zsolt K. *Portraits and Landmarks: The American Literary Culture in the 19th Century*. Debrecen, Hungary: Institute of English and American Studies [University of Debrecen], 2003. 361p.

Wagoner, David. "Thoreau and the Quagmire." *American Poetry Review* 33, No. 4 (July/August 2004): 29. Poem.

Zaleha, Veronica Daley. "From the Pacific Northwest Back East to Concord, Massachusetts." *PNLA Quarterly* 69, No. 3 (Spring 2005): 16–17. Publication of the Northwest Library Association. Describes the reading of *Walden* at the 2004 Annual Gathering.

We are indebted to the following individuals for information used in this Bulletin: Dave Bonney, Clarence Burley, Phil Cafaro, Jim Dawson, Chris Dodge, Richard M. Fawcett, Steven Hartman, Dörte Köster, John Mahoney, Edmund A. Schofield, and Richard Winslow III. Please keep your editor informed of items not yet added and new items as they appear.

New announcements and more detailed descriptions of events are available at
www.thoreausociety.org

Calendar of Events

11 SEPTEMBER 2005
Special Tour, "Thoreau's Walden" Exhibit
The exhibit is at the Harvard Museum of Natural History, Harvard University, **Cambridge, Mass.**

22 SEPTEMBER–17 NOVEMBER 2005
Course, "Transcending Tradition"
Eight-week course by the Concord Historical Collaborative, of which the Society is a member, examining international influences on the Concord authors. **Concord, Mass.**

8 OCTOBER 2005 **Afternoon**
Members' Afternoon, Sage Farm
Society members will have an opportunity to visit this solar-powered home (www.sagefarm.net). **Concord, Mass.**

19 OCTOBER 2005 **7:30 P.M.**
Sterling Delano to Speak at Fruitlands
The title of Delano's talk is "Brook Farm and Fruitlands: Contrasting Transcendental Utopias." **Harvard, Mass.**

NOVEMBER or EARLY DECEMBER 2005
Weekend Seminar at Parker House
The Parker House was the home of the Saturday Club. **Boston, Mass.**

29, 30 DECEMBER 2005
Modern Language Association Annual Convention
Both Thoreau Society sessions, one 29 December, 8:30–9:45 A.M., the other 30 December, 1:45–3:00 P.M., will take place at the Wardman Park Marriott Hotel, **Washington, D.C.**

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